Meanwhile in Ballymena: Anti-Fascist Pride

Saint Imier: International Anarchist Gatheirng

Union Drive in Derry

BLACK STAR

Solidarity With The

Vista Therm Strikers

Organise! stand with the mainly Polish workforce at Vista Therm/Carey Glass in Lurgan who have now been on all-out strike for three weeks against attempts by the company to intimidate workers and stonewall demands for improved pay and conditions. Managers have suspended their shop steward and are refusing to engage with the workers, represented by Unite, who deserve the support of all unions and workers across the North.

'the company simply informed us that they didn't recognise the union and they weren't going to talk to us'
Unite official,
Neil Moore

Derry: Unionisation Drive

Social media in Derry has been buzzing with locals giving off in spades about the city's latest hotel, a four star gaff in the former British army base in the Waterside, the Ebrington Hotel. Some have been outraged about the management clearly wanting to keep out locals in search of a new watering hole, but most are complaints about how they have been treating their workers. A good number of people have already fucked off just weeks after the hotel opened and it seems clear there's no union in the place. Whether that will change might depend on efforts recently to increase trade union membership in workplaces in Derry formerly hostile to organised workers.

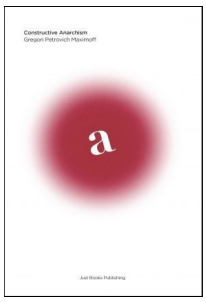
These efforts follow announcements of planned redundancies in two key employers in the city, Seagate who manufacture hard disks and First Source, a call centre who until recently had the Sky contract. The companies are poles apart in many ways. Seagate is an American outfit which came to Derry in 1993 and also had a plant in Limavady which it closed in 2008. The firm employs about 1,400 people in what most locals regard as 'good' jobs, something which has made attempts since the 1990s to encourage trade union membership and recognition extremely difficult. The latest push by Unite and Derry Trades Council began last year and has been the most successful attempt yet, though hasn't quite got to the magic number (or proportion), of workers required by the law to force the company to officially recognise and negotiate with the union. This is in spite of pay cuts and redundancies announced back in May with over a hundred workers to go. First Source, alternatively, are a shit jobs call centre owned by an Indian billionaire which is seen as the last resort for most Derry workers. They've been in Derry and Belfast since the early 2000s and also announced plans to get rid of around 600 workers in May, though apparently plan to re-deploy many of these. The Communications Workers Union (CWU), GMB and most recently Aegis have had campaigns to organise First Source, but none have met with much success.

There's more than a few issues here, obviously it's better that workers are in a trade union even if it is a shit one. However, there is little or no chance that either union now looking to break into these Derry workplaces can do much more than offer minimal protections and gains. Often workers look at trade unions and don't exactly see anything inspiring or encouraging enough to persuade them to join. For most socialists, that's merely a problem of 'leadership' or rather the 'right' leadership, but for anarchists and particularly for Anarcho-Syndicalists, it's about the entire structure and mentality of the existing trade unions.

Trade unions will point to the Tory anti-union laws passed in the 1980s, laws of course, which they have never in forty years even tried to breach once, vainly hoping instead for a Labour government in Westminster to do that for them. Beyond all that, the sheer reformism at the heart of the conventional trade union movement speaks of its lack of vision and democracy, its centralised and bureaucratic structure, and essentially compromised nature as a partner in civic (capitalist) society. Only a directly democratic, mass participatory worker-led grassroots and shopfloor trades unionism has the capacity to move beyond the tired, incremental and conservative reformist strategy of the leaders of trade unionism in Ireland, north and south.

Just Books Publishing

Just Books Publishing, set up by the Just Books Collective, has so far published its first two titles.



The first is a reprint of Gregori Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, to mark the 100th year of existence of the International Workers Association (IWA) the Anarcho-Syndicalist international founded in Berlin in 1922.

isbn 9781739723705

£11.99

The second title, now with a new cover, is Nick Heath's *The Idea. Anarchist Communism: Past, Present and Future* - a welcome and new comprehensive work on anarchist communism, this book seeks to rehabilitate the current of anarchist-communism. To make it better known and understood.

...a good substantial book, and much needed. Lucidly written, it provides a rich brew of engaging discussions of the 'Idea' (anarchist communism as a political philosophy), interesting vignettes of many individual anarchists, and a great historical account of the many anarchist communist organisations over the past 150 years... (Brian Morris on *The Idea)*

isbn 9781739723712

£15.00

Available from:

https://organiseanarchistsireland.com/shop/

St. Imier Anarchist Gathering 19-23 July 2023

Anarchists from across the world gathered in the Swiss town of St. Imier last month to mark the 150th anniversary of the first proper anarchist international back in 1872. The event had to be postponed for a year due to the Covid pandemic. The first gathering of anarchist militants included many of whom had been expelled from the First International (the International Working Men's Association), after its takeover by authoritarian socialists led by Marx and Engels.

Loads of events took place over the five-day gathering including workshops, concerts, film screenings, theatre shows, exhibitions and a bookfair. The organisers stated that 'these gatherings brought anarchists together for collective reflection, sharing experiences, and building solidarity across struggles and borders'.

The scale of the event was impressive, taking place across 12 venues, with over 412 workshop sessions, 48 concerts, 36 film screenings, 11 theatre performances, 7 exhibitions and 95 book fair tables. Despite this and the aspirations of the organisers there has been negative as well as positive feedback from and on the event. Problems with the event being truly international which are associated with bureaucracy, repression and cost have made it largely inaccessible to anarchists from beyond Europe. This was compounded with a focus on meeting in person that seems to have led to a lack of internet access to discussions. Lack of disabled access has also been criticised. More seriously for the 'movement' though, or at least for the event's critics, was the inclusion of elements that seem contrary to basic anarchist principles, and an overemphasis on 'anarchist' subculture.

There were of course opportunities for comrades to meet and reconnect with many extremely worthwhile discussions taking place too. There is nothing particularly new here - the question of lifestyle anarchism or social anarchism has been a problem for some time.

Meanwhile... In Ballymena cop on or cop off?

Didnae get to Belfast Pride this year but apparently all groups had to pre-register to be allocated a place on the parade, except the cops of course, who had earlier announced that they would not have an official section, not wishing to be seen to be endorsing 'that sort of thing'. Wonder if that means Causeway Pride will have Peelers in civvies, ready naturally to batter anyone who's ready to fight off the fascists. It seems likely that the local ex-National Front minor Fuhrer, Mark Brown, will show with some of his nutjobs – pack your clawhammer, comrades!

Get Involved: Help Build A Working Class Alternative.

ORGANISE!

FRIENDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' ASSOCIATION · AMIGOS DE LA ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LAS Y LOS TRABAJADORES

WWW.ORGANISEANARCHISTSIRELAND.COM

Organise! is an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ireland which as affiliated to the International Worker's Association as 'friends of' section. We take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, and particularly the history and tradition of struggle epitomised by the IWA - the anarcho-syndicalist international. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com